

CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY REPORT

Report of the Head of Education and Learning

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

Recommendation: That the Cabinet welcome and endorse the Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report and arrangements be made for the report (and supporting reports) to be published on the Council's website.

1. Background

It is a statutory duty to secure sufficient early years and childcare places.

- 1.1 Sufficiency is met through a variety of providers that includes all types of schools, pre-schools, day nurseries, holiday clubs, breakfast clubs, after school clubs, childminders, etc. These provisions are within the private, voluntary, independent and maintained sectors.
- 1.2 Early years places are for 0-5 year olds. Some 2 year olds and all 3 and 4 year olds are funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant to access 570 hours of education a year (equivalent of 15 hours per week term time).
- 1.3 From September 2017, 3 and 4 year olds from working families will be eligible to an additional 570 hours of childcare per year. This is a total of 1140 hours of early education and childcare per year.
- 1.4 Childcare places are for 0-14 year olds (or up to 18 years old for disabled children). This provision is paid for by parents.
- 1.5 The local authority should take into account what is "reasonably practicable" when assessing what sufficient childcare means.
- 1.6 *The Early Education and Childcare: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities* dated September 2014 sets out that the local authority should report annually to elected Council Members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and make this report available and accessible to parents.
- 1.7 The report must contain information about the supply and demand of childcare for all children aged 0 – 5, out of school and holiday care for school age including children with a disability or special education needs and consider the affordability, accessibility and quality of provision and how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.
- 1.8 This is the fourth Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Annual report; last year's report was approved by cabinet in September 2015 and can be found here: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/eys/for-providers/childcare-sufficiency/childcare-sufficiency-assessment>

2. The Childcare Sufficiency Annual Reports

- 2.1 There is one report and an executive summary.
- 2.2 The Childcare Sufficiency Annual Report 2015/16, which is brought before Cabinet for endorsement, encapsulates key findings from data relating to 2015/16 and actions for the Early Years and Childcare Service for 2016/17.

3. Key Findings

- 3.1 The audit data analysis indicates that overall there is sufficient Early Years and Childcare provision within Devon. Although the rural/urban spread of different types of provision varies.
- 3.2 The level of early years provision has slightly increased again this year.
- 3.3 A higher proportion of children in Devon (72%) achieved a Good Level of Development than the national average (66%) and other statistical local authority neighbours (measured by the Foundation Stage Profile).

- 3.4 The percentage of funded places taken up by 2 year olds has significantly increased this year by 14.9% to 83.9%. Since the report was written it has continued to rise and now stands at 84.9%
- 3.5 There has been a significant increase in the number of providers who have been approved to offer the 2 year old funding with a large proportion of these being funded childminders (80 new providers, 56 of these were childminders).
- 3.6 There continues to be a high percentage of 3 and 4 year olds taking up the early years education funding (99.8%).
- 3.7 The percentage of providers graded as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted remains higher than the South West and National average (Devon 87.4%, National 85.2%, South West 86.6%). Since the report was written the percentage has significantly increased to 94.9%.
- 3.8 The percentage of providers approved to offer early years education funding graded as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted has remained the same over the last year at 90.8% but has since increased to 96.8% (September 2016).

Actions arising from the report

- Aim to raise the quality of funded providers graded as Inadequate or Requires Improvement at their latest Ofsted inspection through the Early Years Support and Challenge programme (Excellence for All).
- Continue to conduct Childcare Sufficiency Hot Spots meetings to discuss the supply and demand of childcare and carry out actions to increase capacity where there is a shortfall.
- Carry out the Annual Survey of Providers in January 2017 to ensure up to date information is held on childcare providers capacity to inform supply of childcare.
- Plan for the expansion of the delivery of Early Years Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds to 30 hours per week for working parents from September 2017.
- Encourage more providers to open for longer hours
- Explore how school sites and buildings can be used outside of term times to provide childcare
- Consider how early years education funding can be provided on bank holidays and at weekends
- Introduce the Citizens Portal for parents to check eligibility for two-year-olds from September 2016
- Continue to Increase the take-up of the places and hours by eligible two-year-olds
- Increase the take-up of the Early Years Pupil Premium
- Review processes so that Devon County Council can fund flexibly and meet the needs of parents working atypical and irregular hours. (7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.)

4. Options/Alternatives

No other options were considered.

5. Consultation/Representations/Technical Data

An acknowledgement has been made within the main Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Annual Report to the Council teams and external partners that have supported the production of the assessment by providing data and information to be included.

6. Financial Considerations

There are no additional cost implications to the report actions which are implemented by the Early Years and Childcare Service.

7. Legal Considerations

There no specific legal considerations in relation to the annual report, key findings or actions arising from the report.

8. Environmental Impact Conditions

There are no specific environmental related issues arising from the report, key findings and proposed actions for the coming year.

9. Equality Considerations

The actions arising from the Childcare Sufficiency Report contribute to the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Sufficiency Assessment Report considers accessibility and affordability of childcare for all families and includes consideration of disabled children, families on low incomes and parents working irregular hours. Early years and childcare provision is registered and inspected by Ofsted and they are required to comply with all legislation relating to anti-discrimination, safeguarding, employment and health and safety. The inspection will assess the extent to which the provider complies with all legal duties including those set out in the Equality Act 2010 and will pay particular attention to the educational outcomes for specific groups of children which includes all children with protected characteristics. (Equality Act 2010) The actions identified for the coming year are a continuation of the ongoing work of the Early Years and Childcare service in promoting equality of opportunity for all parents through provision of accessible, affordable, childcare.

10. Risk Management Considerations

No risks have been identified.

11. Public Health Impact

The report identifies that there are sufficient early years and childcare services for families. This should have a positive impact on public health as families can be supported through early years and childcare providers who enable parents to go to work or training and can signpost to other support if required.

12. Reasons for recommendations

Data analysis for the Childcare Sufficiency Report indicates that the local authority met the early years and childcare sufficiency duty in Devon in 2015/16.

To ensure the duty is met in 2016/17 the main areas of focus will be:

- Ensuring sufficient places for 2 year olds and marketing and promotion of this entitlement.
- Ensuring sufficient places for the increase of the Early Years Entitlement to 1140 hours a year for 3 and 4 year olds of working families from September 2017.
- Raising the quality of the funded places that are available – specifically those judged as Requires Improvement and Inadequate by Ofsted.
- Meeting the need for early years and childcare places where there are new housing developments.
- Ensure availability of appropriate early years and childcare provision for children with disabilities and special education needs.

Dawn Stabb
Acting Head of Education and Learning

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Education: Councillor James McInnes
Chief Officer Childrens Services: Jo Olsson

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

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Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Annual Report 2015/16 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Summary 2015/16